

# Iowa Department on Aging

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Director Donna Harvey

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## **Iowa Department on Aging Encourages Grandparents to Help Grandchildren Make Better Food Choices for a Lifetime of Health**

*Grandparents can be a Positive Influence on the Health of their Grandchildren by Setting a Good Example*

(Des Moines, IA) – Today Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) Director, Donna Harvey, encouraged grandparents to help their grandchildren adopt healthy eating habits that can stay with them throughout their lives.

Director Harvey stated, “The connection between a grandparent and their grandchild is a valuable one. Grandparents invest in their grandchildren, often taking care of them while parents work and giving them emotional and financial support. In Iowa, over 13,400 grandchildren under age eighteen are being cared for by a grandparent. By eating healthier themselves, grandparents can set an example for their grandchildren.”

Tips on helping a grandchild adopt healthier eating habits include:

- If your grandchild eats a meal with you, turn off the TV, engage them in conversation and set an example by making meal choices that include fruits, vegetables whole grains, dairy and lean meats.
- Offer a variety of foods. A fresh pineapple, sweet pepper, fresh spinach salad, salmon, or whole wheat pita bread could be a new food to try.
- Take them along to the grocery store and let them pick out the fruits and vegetables. Give them plenty of choices.
- Let them help you cook. Helping a grandparent in the kitchen can open up the dialogue on preparing meals, where their food comes from and the nutrition value of their choices.
- Choose not to offer sweets as a reward but give hugs and praise for a job well done and go on a walk to a park for play or other outside activities.
- Introduce grandchildren to the website: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) where they will find interactive games, activities and healthy eating tips especially designed for children.

“By making healthier food choices both grandparents and their grandchildren will lead healthier, happier lives,” Director Harvey concluded.

The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) is to provide advocacy, educational, and prevention services to help lowans remain independent as they age. IDA administers over 32 million dollars in services and supports through a network of Area Agencies on Aging across the state.

**Note:**

*This is the first of a series that will center on helping Iowa’s grandparents and grandchildren live healthier as they age.*

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